

Army pullout

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correspondent in Khagrachhari. The camp was established in 1988 to ensure security in 23 areas.

Mahalchhari army zone's Acting Commander Maj Mamunur Rashid said all structures of the temporary camp were knocked down while the army personnel and movable stuffs of the camp were taken to the zone headquarters.

He said the land used for the camp was given back to the original owners—Shanti Bikash Chakma, Naya Ram Chakma, Premo Ranjan and Jyoti Lal Chakma.

The landowners have been given Tk 2,000 each a month as rent of the land. However, the owners are not allowed to construct anything on the land as the army will use it until 2011 as per an agreement, he added.

Mahalchhari upazila Chairman Sona Ratan Chakma said an equal proportion of Bangladeshi settlers and indigenous people live in the 5 acres of land.

Upazila Nirbahi Officer Saiful Arif and the officer-in-charge of Manikchhari Police Station were present during the withdrawal activities.

Around 10 other temporary camps under Khagrachhari brigade of the army will be withdrawn in phases, said sources.

Our correspondent from Rangamati reports: Apart from the Hamid Tila army camp at Ghagra, four other temporary security camps are in the process of withdrawal.

Those are Dighalchhari and Bengali Tila army camps in Barkal upazila, Dewanchar army camp at Subhalang and Rajnagar police camp at Longdu.

Army sources said nine military camps set up in the district 15-25 years ago, including Hamid Tila, will be withdrawn in phases.

The four other camps are Uttanchatra army camp at Chhotoharina, Nagar Ali Tila and Rankatya army camps at Longdu, and Guniapara army camp at Naniachar. Troops withdrawn from the camps were sent to the Chittagong Cantonment, said sources.

The process to withdraw camps from Bandarban is yet to start.

According to the peace accord, the government is supposed to withdraw all military camps and security forces from CHT excepting the three cantonments in Bandarban, Khagrachhari and Rangamati district headquarters and those in Alakadam and Ruma upazilas of Bandarban and Dighinala of Khagrachhari, police and border security.

According to the government, 200 security camps have so far been withdrawn in phases since the accord was signed between the then Awami League government and Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity on December 2, 1997 to bring an end to two decades of insurgency and unrest in the hill

districts. After signing the accord, members of the Jana Sanghati Samity who had been fighting for autonomy of the CHT surrendered arms to the then AL government.

However, implementation of the accord saw little progress after the BNP-Jamaat-led alliance government assumed state power in 2001. The alliance had opposed signing of the accord.

After assuming power in January, the AL again initiated steps to implement the CHT Peace Accord to bring normalcy in the region and in May made Deputy Leader of the House Syeda Sajeda Chowdhury the chairperson of a national committee for implementation of the accord.

DMCH slaps fee

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so 200 nurses should be on duty in a single shift. But around 100 remain on leave every day, cutting further the already stretched manpower.

Besides, nurses and ward boys do not take proper care of the patients and ask for money to serve them.

Several patients and their attendants alleged that the new system is causing sufferings to them.

The ticket price is much higher compared to the admission fee of Tk 11 and the treatment fee of Tk 5.50, visitors said.

Since most of the patients coming to this state-run hospital are very poor, it is difficult for them to meet the expenses.

Ishhaq Mia, a day labourer, told The Daily Star, "The security guards harassed me for ticket money when I brought a female passer-by wounded in a road accident in Keraniganj to the hospital Tuesday."

If the rule is made mandatory, no one would come forward to help people in need, he observed.

Meanwhile, Brig Gen Bazle Quader beat up an attendant named Ramzan for entering the hospital without ticket on Tuesday night.

Ramzan, 20, was looking for blood for his father who was in operating theatre.

The other attendants at the hospital protested at the incident.

Mitford Hospital, another government-run medical establishment, has a system where ticket money is refunded to the attendants once their patients are ready to leave the hospital.

The registers kept at the emergency, outdoor, and administrative units showed that highest 250 to 300 tickets were sold on a day.

DMCH sources said every day more than 2,000 patients stay in the hospital for treatment, and at least 4,000 people visit them.

The ticket system is going to open up a new area of corruption by the hospital employees, sources said.

War crime

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"We must conduct the trial as the people have given us mandate for that," Dipu Moni said.

She said there might be campaigns against the trial but those must be fought by creating public opinion at home and abroad.

AK Khandker said the government is going ahead with the issue very carefully, which might appear to be slow.

"The campaign to build public opinion in favour of trying war criminals must continue," said AK Khandker, also the SCF chairman.

SCF Vice Chairman Maj Gen (ret'd) KM Shafiullah alleged that the government did not take actions against those who spoke against the country's constitution and threatened the victims of war crimes who spoke to the media recently.

"It appears that we are not mentally prepared to try the war criminals," he said.

Shafiullah said although Pakistan is campaigning against the trial, the Bangladesh government has not yet taken necessary steps to create public opinion abroad in favour of the trial.

Eminent jurist barrister Amir-Ul Islam said various organisations working on the issue must unite in mobilising people and collecting evidence of war crimes.

"A high priority of the government now should be to identify all 1971 mass graves," he said.

The SCF Secretary General Lt Gen (ret'd) Harun Or Rashid in his keynote paper said the 1971 war criminals who already got established in business and politics are trying to mount pressure on the government both nationally and internationally to bar them from holding the trial.

Workers' Party President Rashed Khan Menon, SCF Publicity Secretary Harun Habib, Maj Gen (ret'd) Amin Ahmed Chowdhury, Bangladesh Mohila Parishad President Ayesha Khanam, Maj Gen (ret'd) Helal Morshed Khan, Prof Mamtajuiddin Patwari and researcher AHM Shamsul Arefin also spoke.

Tipaimukh

FROM PAGE 1
flow in the Barak and other rivers, and the possibilities of floods and droughts will be examined and analysed by experts, and the results will be provided to JRC.

"If anything harmful for Bangladesh is found through the studies, there will be talks with the Indian government to settle the issues," the prime minister was quoted as saying by her Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad.

Razzaq, also chairman of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Water Resources, informed Hasina that the Indian authorities provided them with all required data.

The Indian side also assured the delegation of providing additional information in the future, if Bangladesh wants. "Besides, talks between Bangladesh and India on the issue will continue," Razzaq added.

Rahman said they informed the prime minister that they saw no structure constructed at Tipaimukh site as the project is still at the initial level.

He said the Indian authorities told them that no irrigation project is planned supplementing the dam.

Other members of the delegation including Jatiya Party lawmaker Ruhul Amin Hawlader, AL lawmakers Fazlul Haque and Anwarul Haque, and independent lawmaker Fazlul Azim were also present at the meeting.

Businesses

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concerned showing wholesale rate of every item at all wholesale outlets and wholesale and retail prices at every retail shop.

News Agency UNB adds: On the prices of essentials, commerce minister said the price of onion should be Tk 15 a kilogramme and Tk 17 on the retail market.

Similarly, the price of potato should be Tk 20 a kg on the wholesale market and Tk 22 on the retail market, Soybean oil Tk 72 on the wholesale market and Tk 76 on the retail market, dates Tk 40 on the wholesale market and Tk 44 on the retail market and lentil Tk 73 on the wholesale market and Tk 81 on the retail market, he said.

Warning the unscrupulous traders, who try to make excessive profits during Ramadan, he said the government would interfere if such bad practices take place during the period.

The commerce minister said the government would utilise the state-run Trading Corporation of Bangladesh to keep the essentials' prices stable through import of some essentials.

He said the country has adequate stock of every essential and suggested that the FBCCI set up a monitoring cell at the country's apex trade body.

Faruk said the government would also set up a similar cell to monitor the essentials' prices.

Aminul, Milon

FROM PAGE 16
Earlier on July 7 this year, Judge Tanjina Ismail of the Special Judge Court-6 sent Aminul, one of the influential ministers in the four-party government, to jail after he along with his lawyers had appeared before the court to seek bail.

Aminul, a key patron of banned Jama'at-ul Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) in Rajshahi region during 2004-2005, was also sentenced to 31 years and six months' rigorous imprisonment for aiding and abetting militants.

On May 20 last year, the same court sentenced Aminul to 10 years' imprisonment on charges of amassing illegal wealth and concealing information in his wealth statement submitted to the Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC).

ACC Deputy Director Syed Ahmed filed the case against the former post and telecommunications minister with Ramna Police Station on December 12, 2007.

In the case statement, the complainant said Aminul showed less value of two houses he built in Dhaka and Rajshahi while he was a minister. In his wealth statement submitted to ACC, Aminul said he had spent Tk 54 lakh for the construction.

But ACC investigation found that the expenditure was Tk 1.08 crore, of which Tk 66 lakh was illegally earned.

Aminul surrendered before the court after staying two and a half years as a fugitive abroad and applying to the government for withdrawing all the 13 cases against him.

He purposely patronised JMB militants abusing the police and administration during the tenure of BNP-led alliance. He was eventually handed down 31 years and six months of imprisonment in Rajshahi in 2007 in this regard.

MILON'S BAIL
The same HC bench granted anticipatory bail for six months to former state minister for education Ehsanul Haque Milon in a case filed for not submitting election expenditure return to the Election Commission.

The EC office in Chandpur earlier filed the case as Milon, who contested the ninth parliamentary election on BNP ticket from there, did not submit his poll expenditure return

to the commission by its deadline.

FAISAL'S BAIL
Another HC bench granted ad interim bail for six months to Faisal in two separate corruption cases in which he was earlier sentenced to 17 years in jail in absentia.

Upon two separate appeals made by the defendant, HC bench of Justice Syed Muhammad Dastagir Husain and Justice Md Rais Uddin passed the bail orders.

Earlier on August 2, Acting Judge AK Roy of the Special Judge Court-10 sent Faisal to jail after he had surrendered before the court.

On August 20 last year, Judge AKM Arifur Rahman of the Special Court-10 sentenced Faisal to eight years' imprisonment for amassing wealth illegally from unknown sources of income and two years' imprisonment for concealing information in his wealth statement submitted to the ACC.

ACC Assistant Director Talebor Rahman filed the case against Faisal, managing director of Pacific Motors and chairman of AB Bank Ltd, and his wife with Gulshan Police Station on December 10 last year for amassing wealth worth Tk 1.66 crore and hiding information about wealth worth Tk 1.50 crore.

The court had also ordered confiscation of Faisal's ill-gotten wealth worth Tk 1.66 crore.

Earlier on April 13, another special court gave Faisal seven years in jail for aiding and abetting former Jamaat law-maker Shahjahan Chowdhury in committing crimes and amassing wealth illegally.

The case was filed against them with Chittagong Bandar Police Station in July 2007 and later shifted to Dhaka for its trial.

Faisal returned to the country from Singapore on August 2 and appeared before the court on a wheel chair.

Hearing
FROM PAGE 1
Court fixed the date of hearing after the case was transferred to the court on Thursday for trial.

Arrest warrants would be issued against the accused if the charges are taken into cognisance, the sources said.

On Wednesday, Deputy Assistant Director of Anti-Corruption Commission (ACC) Harunur Rashid, also the investigation officer of the embezzlement case, submitted the charge sheet to the Dhaka Chief Metropolitan Magistrate's Court showing 36 prosecution witnesses.

The other charge-sheeted are former BNP lawmaker Kazi Salimul Haque, Khaleda's nephew Mominur Rahman, Sharfuddin Ahmed, and former Principal Secretary Kamal Uddin Siddiqui. Mominur and Kamal Uddin have been absconding.

Khaleda is also accused in Gatco, Niko and Barapukuria corruption cases while Tarique in 15 other cases.

Of the accused, Khaleda, Tarique, Salimul and Sharfuddin were earlier granted bails from the High Court on different dates.

The higher courts had stayed the proceedings of all the three cases against Khaleda and Tarique following writ petitions.

According to the case statement, then Prime Minister Khaleda Zia and the other accused embezzled over Tk 2.10 crore by establishing Zia Orphanage Trust that exists only on paper.

The complainant alleged that on June 9, 1991, a grant of \$1,255,000, equivalent to about Tk 4.45 crore at the time, was transferred from United Saudi Commercial Bank to Prime Minister's Orphanage Fund—a fund that was created by the then premier shortly before the transfer—as part of the embezzlement scheme.

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Shab-e-Barat

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and discussions.

Bangladesh Television, Bangladesh Betar and private TV channels aired special programmes, while newspapers published articles highlighting the significance of the night, also called Lailatul Barat.

President Zillur Rahman and Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina issued separate messages felicitating Muslims on the occasion.

In his message, Zillur said, "The auspicious night of Shab-e-Barat brings a special opportunity for mankind to get blessings and mercy from the almighty Allah."

In her message, Hasina said, "Allah forgives those who seek mercy from Him and grants prayers of His creation on the night called the night of fortune."

She urged all to work sincerely for the welfare of mankind and building the country imbued with the teachings of the holy night.

Meanwhile, Dhaka Metropolitan Police earlier imposed a ban on carrying all types of firearms, explosives and other harmful objects, and explosion of fireworks and crackers in the city from 6:00pm Thursday until further order to maintain the sanctity of Shab-e-Barat.

Ensure
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PM's Press Secretary Abul Kalam Azad briefed reporters after the meeting.

Hasina said the right to information act was passed in the first session of the Jatiya Sangsad and the information commission has been formed as the present government is firmly committed to ensuring the free flow of information.

"Passing of the right to information act in parliament was an epoch-making incident in Bangladesh history," she said adding that the free flow of information will greatly help the government establish accountability and transparency in every sphere of society and the administration.

The PM said the government will continue to work in safeguarding the people's right to information as per the constitution.

Hasina told the commissioners that the government would provide every necessary logistic support to the commission for its smooth and effective functioning.

Padma Bridge
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Guerrero also discussed various development projects under the communications ministry and said the WB would continue its support for Bangladesh's communications sector.

Roads and Railway Division Secretary AMM Ali Kabir, Bridges Division Secretary M Zahid Hossain, Bangladesh Railway Director General M Belayer Hossain, among others, were present.

Mumbai
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Their lawyers have indicated that they will appeal against the death penalty, which is given rarely in India and is often delayed indefinitely or commuted by the president.

The court had heard the blasts were carried out in retaliation for Hindu atrocities against Muslims during riots in western Gujarat state in 2002 and the trio claimed to be members of the so-called "Gujarat Muslim Revenge Force".

Prosecutor Ujjwal Nikam also said they were members of the banned, Pakistan-based Islamist group Lashkar-e-Taiba, which was also allegedly behind last year's militant attacks in Mumbai that killed 166 people.

Haneef Sayyed's lawyer had argued that his client should be sent to prison for life without parole.

Fahmeeda Sayyed's counsel also argued against the death penalty, saying she was a poor, uneducated woman pressured into committing the crime by her husband out of Muslim duty and was taken along to "camouflage" the group's intentions.

Ansari's lawyer Sushan Kunjuraman made no submissions but the convicted bomber told the judge he did not agree with the verdict.

Prosecutor Nikam rejected the defence arguments, saying the offences fell into the "rarest of rare" category of crimes deemed appropriate for a judge to pass the death sentence.

The meticulously planned and executed bombings, carried out by planting high explosive devices in the boots of taxis, were of "extreme brutality" and led to the "massacre of innocent people", he told the court.

"It would be a mockery of justice if the death penalty is not imposed," he added.

The trial was the biggest anti-terrorism case in the city since the 1993 "Black Friday" bombings in which 257 people were killed and at least 800 others were injured.

Pak Taliban chief

FROM PAGE 1
Pakistani Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, Pakistan views him as its top internal threat and has been preparing an offensive against him.

For years, the US considered Mehsud a lesser threat to its interests than some of the other Pakistani Taliban and al-Qaeda, because most of his attacks were focused inside Pakistan, not against US and Nato troops in Afghanistan.

That view appeared to change in recent months as Mehsud's power grew and concerns mounted that increasing violence in Pakistan could destabilise the US ally and threaten the entire region.

The Pakistani intelligence officials said Mehsud's body was buried in the village of Nardusai in South Waziristan, near the site of the missile strike.

One official said he had seen a classified intelligence report stating Mehsud was dead and buried, but that agents had not seen the body since the area is under Taliban control.

Pakistani Interior Minister Rehman Malik told reporters in Islamabad he could confirm the death of Mehsud's wife but not of the Taliban leader himself, although information pointed in that direction.

"Yes, (a) lot of information is pouring in from that area that he's dead, but I'm unable to confirm unless I have solid evidence," he said.

Another senior Pakistani intelligence official said phone and other communications intercepts he would not be more specific had led authorities to suspect Mehsud was dead, but he also stressed there was no definitive evidence yet.

An American counterterrorism official said the US government was also looking into the reports. The official indicated the United States did not yet have physical evidence remains that would prove who died. But he said there were other ways of determining who was killed in the strike. He declined to describe them.

Both officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to speak on the matter publicly.

A local tribesman, who also spoke on condition his name not be used, said Mehsud had been at his father-in-law's house being treated for kidney pain, and had been put on a stretcher and taken to the missile strike. The tribesman claimed he attended the Taliban chief's funeral.

Last year, a doctor for Mehsud announced the militant leader had died of kidney failure, but the reports turned out to be false.

In Afghanistan, Defence Ministry spokesman Gen. Mohammad Zahir Azimi said Mehsud's fighters would cross the border into eastern Afghanistan occasionally to help out one of most ruthless Afghan insurgent leaders Siraj

peared in the ninth century. Devout Shias call him the Hidden Imam and believe he will return to restore peace and harmony.

The ceremonies concluded early Friday morning. Iraqi Vice President Adel Abdul-Mahdi said in a statement this week that one of those alleged gunmen served as one of his bodyguards and eight others were soldiers in the Iraqi army.

Roads to and from Karbala have been crowded with pilgrims in vehicles or on foot this week as Shias commemorate the birth of the Twelfth Imam, a disappeared ninth century Muslim leader revered as a coming messiah.

Pilgrims in the holy city held candle-lighting ceremonies from midnight to dawn at a mosque built on a site said to be the last place visited by the Mahdi before his disappearance.

Streets in the city cleared out in the early hours of the morning with no reports of any violence.

Violence in Iraq has dropped off markedly in recent months, but attacks against security forces and civilians remain common in Baghdad, Mosul and the ethnically divided northern oil city of Kirkuk.

The number of violent deaths in Iraq fell by a third from the June figure of 437 to 275 in July, the first month local forces have been in charge of security in urban areas since the US-led invasion of 2003.

The figure in May was 155, the lowest of any month since the invasion.

A string of six powerful bombs targeting Shia worshippers in Baghdad last week killed 28 people and wounded 63 in what appeared to be a bid to reignite sectarian fighting between Sunnis and Shias.

That sectarian war