

Implement deal

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Presided over by Iyotirindra Bodhipriya Lama, the rally was also addressed by President of Bangladesh Workers Party Rashed Khan Menon, Gono Forum president member Pankaj Bhattacharya, Secretary of Bangladesh Adivasi Forum Sanjib Drong, president member of Bangladesh Communist Party comrade Md Shah Alam, Organising Secretary of PCJSS Shaktipada Tripura, leader of CHT Mohila Samity Suprova Chakma, and President of Pahari Chhatra Parishad Udayan Tripura.

Iyotirindra also known as Santu Lama said the problems of CHT did not go away over the last one decade as the peace accord was not implemented fully.

Urging the government to ban anti-peace-treaty organisation United People's Democratic Front (UPDF), Lama said one of the hurdles to peace agreement implementation is UPDF. Armed cadres of UPDF are killing the leaders and activists of PCJSS and collecting toll from innocent people, he claimed.

Anti-peace-treaty forces are backing the UPDF and hatching conspiracies to nullify the accord, Santu alleged.

Urging the government to immediately stop "Operation Uttaran" in CHT, Santu Lama said the people of CHT had to endure military domination during the last 12 years.

Rashed Khan Menon said sustainable peace would not be achieved in CHT without implementation of the accord. "We do not want to see more disturbance in the hills as the present Awami League-led grand alliance government signed the deal to bring permanent peace in hills."

Blaming the past BNP-Jamaat government, Menon said the BNP government organised "long march" against the peace accord and created anti-peace treaty forces like Samo Odhikar Andolan for scrapping the treaty. He urged making the CHT Land Commission active for resolving land disputes, which he termed the most complicated issue in the treaty.

Pankaj Bhattacharya called for full implementation of the accord, which brought an end to two decades of bush war in CHT, signed on December 2, in

1997. "We are very concerned as the accord has not been implemented fully in the last 12 years," he said, adding that the deal was not signed for imposing "Operation Uttaran".

PCJSS brought out a huge procession after the meeting in Rajbari that went up to Banarupa. Thousands of indigenous people with leaders and activists of PCJSS, Mohila Samity and Pahari Chhatra Parishad gathered at the Rajbari Gymnasium with colourful banners and festoons.

Rangamati Hill District Council and the district administration jointly observed the day.

District Awami League also observed the day by holding a rally and bringing out a procession in Rangamati. A cultural programme, organised by PCJSS, was held at the district Shilpakola Academy in the town.

Our Correspondent in Khagrachhari adds: Speakers at a discussion yesterday said most of the provisions in the peace treaty are yet to be implemented. They alleged that many indigenous people became victims of land grabbers who had the backing of the administration and security personnel.

The discussion was organised by PCJSS at Khagrachhari Government College yesterday. It was presided over by its central committee leader Jatindra Lal Chakma.

They also demanded meeting their seven-point demand that include review of CHT Affairs Land Commission Act, 2001 and withdrawal of all cases filed against PCJSS members and their rehabilitation as per accord.

CHT Regional Council member and PCJSS leaders Rupayon Dewan, Suda Sindhui Khisha, PCJSS district unit leader Sudakar Tripura, Sudarshan Chakma and Kakoli Khisha also took part in the discussion.

Our Bandaban correspondent reports: Bir Bahadur, MP, expressed firm resolve that during its tenure the present government would fully implement the peace accord.

He was addressing a rally organised by the Bandaban district council.

Indigenous people of Bandaban district brought out a colourful procession in the town in the afternoon.

2 crushed under trains

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Two people were crushed under trains at different places in the capital yesterday.

Among them, Mojibur Rahman, 50, was a security guard of Desh Bangla Securities of Uttara. But the identity of a youth of around 28 could not be known.

Government Railway Police (GRP) sources said a train ran over Mojibur while he was crossing the rail line beside Azampur Haji Market around 4:30pm.

Another train crushed the youth when he was crossing the line near Khidmah Hospital at Khilgaon.

The GRP recovered the bodies and sent those to Dhaka Medical College Morgue for autopsy.

Meanwhile, an unidentified man of about 50 was also crushed under train on Tuesday near Kuril Biswa Road.

Iraqi shoe

FROM PAGE 16 The identity of the new shoe-thrower and his motivation weren't immediately clear, but he appeared to be an Iraqi. It was not known if the intruder was a journalist or just pretended to be one to attend the news conference at a center for foreign reporters.

The Paris news conference was held so he could talk about his experiences.

Whatever his motive, the confrontation didn't stop there.

Al-Zeidi's brother, Maithan, chased the attacker in the audience and what else? pelted him with a shoe as he left the room.

Muntadhar al-Zeidi, a TV reporter, became a hero to many opponents of the Iraq war when he hurled his shoes at Bush during a news conference in Baghdad in December 2008 while shouting: "This is from the widows, the orphans and those who were killed in Iraq." Al-Zeidi was quickly wrestled to the ground by security guards, then imprisoned for nine months before being released in September.

Wholesale bail

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appeals are disposed of. "We will review the orders passed by this High Court bench," he said, adding that the bench passed the orders so quickly that the state law officers could not properly follow the matters and oppose the orders.

Mahbubey Alam said if the HC continues granting bail to convicted persons at this rate, soon there will be no more convicts in the jails of the country.

Law Minister Shafique Ahmed yesterday termed the incident unusual and unexpected.

Talking to The Daily Star, Shafique said earlier convicts sentenced to life term by trial courts would appeal to the High Court after spending at least 10 years in jail. But convicts are now appealing for bail only after one or two years in jail and the High Court is granting them bail, which is unusual and unexpected.

Sajeda

FROM PAGE 16 Bangabandhu International Conference Centre yesterday. Chittagong Hill Tracts Development Facility and UNDP jointly organised the programme.

The implementation of the peace accord was halted during the BNP-Jamaat government though they had formed a committee headed by Mannan Bhuiyan to execute the treaty, said Sajeda adding the committee had done nothing.

She said the national committee for implementation of the accord met several times to determine the functioning of the peace pact.

To implement the accord, the present government has already taken some steps like the rehabilitation of 12,223 tribal refugee families, rehabilitation of Jana Sanghati Samiti members and cluster village programme for 26,000 Bangalee families, Sajeda said.

The session was addressed by, among others, Chairman of Parliamentary Standing Committee for CHT Ministry Mohammad Shah Alam, UN Resident Coordinator Renata Lok Dessalain and Head of the European Commission Delegation to Bangladesh Stefan Frowein.

A three-day-long exhibition also started on the first floor of the Bangabandhu International Convention Centre where around 100 stalls from different tribes displayed ethnic products.

Ulfa founder

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Gulshan in the capital. Contacted, the high-ups of Bangladesh Police, Rapid Action Battalion (Rab), Dhaka Metropolitan Police (DMP), Criminal Investigation Department (CID), Detective Branch (DB) and Special Branch (SB) denied such arrest.

A report of Indian state-run news agency PTI says: Home Secretary G K Pillai and his Bangladesh counterpart Abdu Sobhan Sikder, who is currently in India, pleaded ignorance about the detention of Rajkhowa.

"Because I am away from the country, I do not have such information till now," Sikder told reporters when asked about the development.

Pillai said, "We also have no official information of arrest of Arabinda Rajkhowa in Bangladesh or anywhere else."

Meanwhile, Indian English dailies the Hindustan Times and the Economic Times report that Ulfa chairman Rajkhowa, its publicity secretary Apurba Baruah and another separatist group National Liberation Front of Tripura (NLFT) chairman Biswamohan Debbarma were also arrested in Bangladesh.

Quoting home ministry sources, the Indian media reports say efforts are on to get 53-year-old Ulfa Chairman Rajkhowa deported to India, writes our correspondent in Delhi.

According to reports published in the Hindustan Times and the Economic Times, the Ulfa and NLFT leaders were

believed to have been arrested by the Special Branch of the Bangladesh police and are likely to be handed over to the Indian authorities along the Indo-Bangla border either in Tripura or in Assam soon.

The Ulfa chairman has reportedly been in favour of talks with the central government of India.

Talking to The Daily Star, Additional Inspector General of Police NBK Tripura, Rab Director General Hassan Mahmood Khandker, DMP Commissioner AKM Shahidul Hoque, Special Superintendent Meer Shahidul Islam of CID and SS Mahbubur Rahman of SB said they have no information regarding the arrest of any Ulfa or NLFT leaders.

Senior Ulfa leader Anup Chetia has been confined in Bangladesh jail since 1998.

According to PTI, with Rajkhowa's detention, Ulfa is now left with only two top leaders, commander-in-chief Paresh Barua and his deputy Raju Barua, who are yet to be arrested. It is believed that Paresh Barua now shuttles among China, Thailand and Malaysia.

Rajkhowa is among five people who founded the separatist group on April 7, 1979.

Accused in several cases, including that of waging war against India, Rajkhowa has an Interpol Red Corner notice against him. He has been out of India since 1992 and is said to have lived in places like Myanmar, Thailand, Bhutan apart from Bangladesh, added PTI.

BDR chief

FROM PAGE 16 issues, especially the recent military build up and manoeuvre by the Myanmar government at the border with Bangladesh.

He will lead a six-member delegation also to discuss the thorny issue of Rohingya refugees, trans-border crimes, smuggling of arms and illicit drugs, and problems faced by Bangladeshi fishermen in the Nafriver and Bay of Bengal.

"The visit is aimed at building confidence between the border forces of the two countries against the backdrop of the recent developments in the border areas," Mainul Islam told The Daily Star yesterday.

The BDR chief said they hold talks and share information regularly with the BSF but no DG-level meeting between the border forces of Bangladesh and Myanmar was held in the last three years.

"We hardly hold talks or exchange views even if any crisis arises in border areas," he added.

The BDR headquarters put forward the proposal for the visit following days of tension in October this year when Myanmar military junta mobilised massive forces at the frontier.

Numerous intelligence reports of BDR and other agencies then informed the Bangladesh government that Myanmar was preparing for a war to establish its control over the mineral resource rich waters of the Bay of Bengal.

In November 2008, the Myanmar government was forced to withdraw its oil and gas exploration project, and drilling equipment from the waters claimed by Bangladesh.

Some of the intelligence reports mentioned that this year's military build up at the border by Myanmar was nothing but manoeuvring for gain-

ing an opportunity to resume its explorations in the Bay of Bengal.

Some other reports however warned the Bangladesh authorities that Myanmar might launch an attack on Bangladesh in a bid to capture the Saint Martin's Island and a part of Teknaf to establish its hegemony in the Bay of Bengal.

During the upcoming four-day trip, the BDR chief will meet his counterpart Nasaka chief, and the interior and home ministers of that country. He will also call on the Bangladesh ambassador in Yangon, according to the itinerary the BDR headquarters sent to the home ministry.

It said the BDR chief will also visit the Bangladesh-Myanmar border at Maungdaw in Rakhine state where the military mobilisation occurred, and where now stands a barbed wire fence erected by Myanmar.

He is being scheduled to visit the border immigration headquarters of Myanmar and the headquarters western command as well.

"The director general will discuss border issues like smuggling of arms and drugs, recent Nasaka activities along the Bangladesh-Myanmar border, problems faced by Bangladeshi fishermen, illegal crossing of border and other issues of mutual interests," said a BDR letter sent to the home ministry.

The letter hoped that the visit and cooperation of the Myanmar authorities will eventually help maintain peace and tranquillity along the border of the two neighbours.

Three senior BDR officers and one official each from the foreign ministry and home ministry will accompany the BDR chief during the visit.

Hasina sets busy

FROM PAGE 16 Meanwhile, the three-day home secretary-level talks between Bangladesh and India finalised three key agreements yesterday.

The draft agreements on mutual legal assistance in criminal matters, transfer of sentenced persons and bilateral agreement on combating international terrorism, organised crime and illicit drug trafficking will be signed during Sheikh Hasina's three-day visit to India from December 18.

A joint statement issued at the end of the meeting said both sides agreed to develop mechanisms to further hasten the process of verification of nationality status of prisoners lodged in jails of either country, particularly of those who have completed their sentence, to enable their early repatriation," Bangladesh Home Secretary Abdu Sobhan Sikder told reporters here.

Asked about reports of militants setting up bases in Bangladesh, Sikder said his country did not harbour any elements inimical to India.

To a question about the possibility of launching joint operations against militants, Indian Home Secretary Gopal Krishna Pillai said, "No such discussion had taken place during the talks."

redouble efforts to locate persons against whom the Interpol issued Red Corner Notices in either country for their arrest.

The Indian side expressed its concern over smuggling of fake Indian currencies into the country and sought Bangladesh's cooperation for preventing such activities.

Both sides agreed that there was a need to expedite the settlement of land boundary related issues and it was agreed that these would be discussed in the next meeting of the Joint Border Working Group.

They recognised the need for electrification of Dahagram and Angarpota enclaves along the Indo-Bangla border as a humanitarian gesture.

The two sides noted the menace of trafficking of women and children along Indo-Bangladesh border and agreed to designate nodal points on both sides for coordinated action.

The two sides welcomed the holding of the first DG-level talks between the Narcotic Control Bureau of India and Department of Narcotics Control in Bangladesh and reiterated the need for further enhancing cooperation including in capacity building of the two agencies.

The next home secretary-level talks would be held in Dhaka, the date for which would be decided through diplomatic channels.

Dhaka streets

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marking the lanes during the Eid vacation the task will start from tonight.

Deputy Commissioner (DC) of Dhaka Metropolitan Police (Traffic) Awlad Hossain said, "We will demarcate lanes on VIP road, Mirpur road (from Science Lab to Technical), and Mohakhali Diversion to Tongi Bridge. If the system brings positive results on traffic movement, the DMP will mark lanes on other important roads across the capital."

The DMP authorities asked the drivers not to overtake the vehicles taking turn on left to alter lane before reaching the intersection and not to block lanes at intersections keeping vehicles on wrong lanes.

The sources said 12 check posts will be set up at Hotel Sheraton, Hotel Sonargaon, Bijoy Sarani, Farmgate, Kakoli, Progoti Sarani, Airport square, House Building, Science Lab, Russell Square, Asad Gate and Technical intersections to enforce the rule.

The DMP has swung to traffic light signals phasing out manual controlling system from November 23 to ease traffic congestion in the capital.

On December 8, the DMP will start a drive against traffic rule violation. Drivers would be penalised with Tk 1,000 each and suspension of driving licence for violating traffic rules.

Amended

FROM PAGE 16 December. Later the draft of the amended second PRSP was placed in the parliament for discussion on September 15, he said.

The second PRSP has identified five main strategies and five supporting strategies.

The five main strategies are: macro-economic management for poor-friendly economic growth, increase of investment in the important sectors, construction of required infrastructures, social safety net for vulnerable group of people and human resource development.

The five supporting strategies are: participatory empowerment of all ethnic groups in development activities, establishment of good governance, providing effective public service, facing environment and climate change for sustainable development, and increasing production capacity through development and expansion of technology.

The strategy paper also mentioned the risks and challenges to the macro-economy for poor-friendly growth in next two years.

In the summary of the strategy paper decline in the rate of growth has been stated as the biggest risk during the period of strategy implementation.

Increase in investment in GDP, stagnation in revenue growth, growth in export activities, stagnation in remittance inflow, involving ever growing manpower in the productive sectors and maintaining food security have been identified as some other challenges during the implementation period.

In yesterday's meeting at the Planning Ministry, previous Tk 3,75,000 crore plan was downsized to Tk 3,45,740 crore through some amendments and it was finalised. This will be sent to the cabinet for final approval.

British MP

FROM PAGE 1 something that should only concern Bangladesh and India.

"It is an international issue because it will have consequences on the climate and environment," he said.

"This is not a campaign against India," he said, and added that he is seeking an investigation as to whether the dam would adversely impact both India and Bangladesh.

However as an elected MP of a London constituency with 40,000 people from Sylhet, George Galloway MP said he believes he is under an obligation to highlight the damage the dam may cause to the Sylhet area.

George Galloway MP also led a protest march from Sylhet city to the Barak River at the Indian-Bangladesh border on Sunday.

Last month members of his Respect Party UK staged demonstrations against the dam's construction in front of the Indian High Commission.

Galloway joined the UK's Labour Party when he was just 13 years old.

In 2003 he was expelled from the British Labour Party for repeatedly criticising the UK government's role in the Iraq War.

He became Vice President of the Stop the War Coalition in 2001 and won his seat as a member of the Respect Party in 2005.

Other UK delegates include councillors Abjol Miah and M Mamunur Rashid, both of whom will be representing the Respect Party at the upcoming UK election, and 17 other British representatives.

Tarique, Koko

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Rescue ship Rustam reached the spot around 11:00pm on Tuesday to help already arrived rescue ship Hamza in yesterday's rescue operation that started at 10:00am. Several hundred relatives of missing passengers were still waiting on the river bank. They hoped that the launch would be lifted from water after Rustam's arrival, but it was delayed.

The rescue operation might go on for 10 to 12 hours today as well to be completed, said Shamsul Haque Patwary, project implementation officer of Lalmohon upazila.

Meanwhile, Lalmohon Students' Association, a local student organisation, demonstrated in the upazila headquarters protesting the tragic launch capsizing forming human chains, holding condolence rallies, and submitting a memorandum to the prime minister through the upazila administration yesterday.

In the memorandum the student organisation put forward a 13-point charter of demands including one for removing all unfit launches

from the river route.

Lalmohon upazila BNP on the other hand arranged a press conference around noon in its office where its convener also local municipality mayor, Enayet Kabir, spoke. He said the ruling party might have been behind the filing of the case to harass BNP leaders and to hinder the party's activities. Tarique is also the senior joint secretary general of BNP.

Abdur Rahim, claiming to be the master of MV Coco-2, in a press statement said surviving passenger Md Kamrul Hossain, who filed another case in connection with the accident, implicated innocent people instead of implicating the real offenders.

He said he himself was implicated in that case as the master of Coco-4, while actually he is not even a staff of that launch, rather he was on duty on Coco-2 during the incident.

He also said another man named Mohammad Mizan was also accused in the case while no crew member of Coco-4 is named Mizan.

Taliban to step

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become reality. The extra 30,000 troops that will come to Afghanistan will provoke stronger resistance and fighting," he added.

"They will withdraw shamefully. They cannot achieve their hopes and goals," the spokesman said.

The statement said the Americans would face the same fate as Russian and British soldiers previously -- during the 19th century British invasion of Afghanistan and that by Soviet troops in the 1980s.

The Taliban were in power between 1996 and 2001 before they were ousted in a US-led attack that was backed by most members of the Nato alliance. Remnants of the Taliban have been leading an insurgency to regain power since then.

In Brussels, US allies are ready to send at least 5,000 reinforcements to Afghanistan after President Barack Obama's decision to begin a troop surge. Nato Secretary General Anders Fogh Rasmussen said Wednesday.

Other Nato members and their partners "will send at least 5,000 soldiers to this operation, and possibly a few more thousand on top of it," Rasmussen told reporters in Brussels.

"I think you will see some pledges right now, and some at a later stage" once an international conference on Afghanistan is held in London in January, he said. "Then you will see a build-up of troops during 2010."

Obama said earlier Tuesday that he is sending 30,000 more troops to Afghanistan, as he vowed to "seize the initiative" to end an unpopular war against the Taliban and al-Qaeda and start a pullout in July 2011.

Unveiling a fast-track strategy, he pledged for the first time that US forces would start coming home in 19 months, noting in a major speech that Nato's credibility was on the line.

With that in mind, Rasmussen urged Nato and

its partners, more than 40 nations with over 70,000 troops in the International Security Assistance Force (Isaf), to follow the US lead.

"This is not just America's war," he said. "What is happening in Afghanistan poses a clear and present danger to the citizens in all our countries."

"We must all do more," he said. "We must now demonstrate that multilateralism produces results."

JRC meets

FROM PAGE 16 the draft agreement for sharing water of the Teesta to India before Sheikh Hasina's visit to New Delhi, which is likely to be from December 18.

They said after the Ganges, Bangladesh is giving priority to Teesta among the other common rivers and that is why it is eager to handover a draft of an agreement.

Officials of foreign and water resources ministries said Bangladesh will seriously pursue finalising the draft agreement during the experts' meeting beginning tomorrow (Friday). Bangladesh has already finalised its draft agreement, which will be handed over to India very soon.

Water resources ministry officials said Bangladesh in 1999, after the signing of the Ganges water sharing treaty in 1996, approached India to sign an agreement to share the water of the Teesta.

During Foreign Minister Dipu Moni's India visit in September this year, Bangladesh and India in a joint statement agreed to form a joint technical team to gather hydrological data on Teesta's water availability. The joint-body is yet to be formed.

Sources said in 2005 Bangladesh handed over a draft of an agreement on Teesta water sharing to India with the proposal that Bangladesh and India each would get 40 percent water of the Teesta and 20 percent water would go to the Bay of Bengal for maintaining the channel of the river. India did not accept the Bangladesh proposal.

Suicide bomber

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reporters that a man aged around 17 or 18 and wearing a suicide jacket approached the heavily-guarded navy complex on foot.

"Security officials checked him and one navy police constable, Mohammad Ashraf, asked him to take off his coat. The bomber then blew himself up and the navy constable died in the blast," he said.

Pakistan navy spokesman Captain Mubeen Bajwa said security guards stopped the bomber after a taxi driver complained about his suspicious behaviour.

"A total of 11 people were injured including five soldiers of the Pakistan Navy and six civilians. One of them is critically injured," he said.

Witnesses described the scene in the aftermath of the blast, which shattered car windows and left blood streaked across the road.

"I was in a nearby street when I heard a loud explosion," said witness Imtiaz Ali. "When I reached to the main Margalla Road there was smoke near the navy complex. I saw three soldiers lying wounded."

The attack came a day after a Pakistani provincial lawmaker was killed in a suicide attack in the northwestern Swat valley, and as Taliban insurgents up attacks to avenge the military's multi-pronged offensive.

Islamabad itself was last hit in late October, when twin suicide blasts tore through the International Islamic University, killing up to five

people. A brazen raid and hostage siege at the army headquarters in the garrison city of Rawalpindi in October hit the heart of the country's most powerful establishment.

Security has drastically deteriorated in Pakistan since Islamabad joined the US-led "war on terror" and hundreds of Taliban and al-Qaeda-linked militants fled into the tribal belt after the 2001 invasion of Afghanistan.

Islamabad has this year launched multiple offensives against Taliban militants across the country's north-west, sparking a wave of retaliatory suicide bombings, but its Western allies are urging the administration to do more.

Laying out his new Afghan strategy late Tuesday, Obama vowed to start a withdrawal of troops from the war-torn nation in July 2011.

He praised Pakistan's operations in South Waziristan, but indicated that pressure would remain on Islamabad.

"We will strengthen Pakistan's capacity to target those groups that threaten our countries, and have made it clear that we cannot tolerate a safe-haven for terrorists whose location is known, and whose intentions are clear," he said.

Washington and London have expressed concern that militants hide out in Pakistan's mountainous and lawless border regions, regrouping and training before slipping over the border to target foreign forces.

Cops form probe

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General of Police in Chittagong Asaduzzaman Khan to investigate the incident and the failure of police in protecting the coastal forest in Sitakunda.

The probe body has been asked to submit report within three days after commencement of the probe, DIG Asaduzzaman told The Daily Star last evening.