

PROCESSIONS, RALLIES IN CHT ON 15TH ANNIVERSARY

# Call for united movement to fully implement peace accord

STAR NATIONAL DESK

Different organisations as well as the local administrations held rallies, processions and cultural programmes across the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) region yesterday in observance of the 15th anniversary of the CHT peace accord.

At a public rally organised by Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity (PCJSS) on the compound of Rangamati Gymnasium in the town, leaders of PCJSS and its front organisations yesterday urged the government to take a clear action plan and road map for proper execution of the accord, reports our Rangamati correspondent.

The speakers also called upon all to be united to launch a tougher movement

to uproot all anti-peace treaty elements for full implementation of the historic peace accord.

They criticised the government for what they said not taking any remarkable initiatives on the vital issues of the accord including land dispute during the past four years.

They slated lawmakers Dipankar Talukdar and Bir Bahadur for making 'false statements' about the peace deal and 'not playing' due role for its full implementation.

They also urged the government to ban the anti-peace organisation United People's Democratic Front (UPDF) for the greater interest in hills.

The speakers demanded formation of 'hill police force', handing over matters relating

to civil affairs and law and order to hill district councils (HDCs), proper steps for land management, preparation of voter lists in CHT with only the permanent residents in hills, holding elections to CHT Regional Council (CHTRC) and HDCs, enactment of rules of business for CHTRC and HDCs to strengthen these bodies, rehabilitation of Bangalee settlers outside the hills and amendment of CHT Land Dispute Resolution Commission Act-2001 for resolving land disputes.

Ushatan Talukder, vice-president of central PCJSS, addressed as chief guest at the rally presided over by Subarna Chakma, vice-president of PCJSS district unit.

Among others, Pranati Bikash Chakma, secretary of

PCJSS, central unit, comrade Shah Alam, secretary of Chittagong unit of the Communist Party of Bangladesh, Suprova Chakma, secretary of CHT Mohila Samity, Sunirmol Chakma, president of Jubo Samity, addressed.

Later the PCJSS brought out a big colourful procession in the town.

Rangamati HDC and the district administration jointly observed the day.

District Awami League also held a meeting and brought out a procession in Rangamati town marking the 15th anniversary of the peace deal.

PCJSS and its front organisations -- CHT Mohila Samity, Hill Women's Federation, Jubo Samity, and

Pahari Chhatra Parishad yesterday took different programmes in observance of the day in Rangamati, Bandarban and Khagrachhari hill districts.

The CHT peace accord signed between the PCJSS and the then Awami League government on December 2 in 1997 brought an end to decades-long insurgency in CHT region.

Our Khagrachhari Correspondent adds: MN Larma faction of PCJSS held a rally at Larma Square in the district town yesterday marking the 15th anniversary of the CHT peace accord.

Speakers at the rally demanded that the government immediately activate CHT Land Dispute Resolution Commission after amendment of its controversial points to solve the land disputes in CHT.

They also urged all regional political parties to launch joint movement for full implementation of the CHT accord.

Sudha Sindhu Khisha, co-chairman of PCJSS (MN Larma faction), spoke as chief guest at the programme presided over by its Khagrachhari Sadar upazila unit chief Suvash Shanti Chakma.

Later, the activists of the forum brought out a procession that marched the main streets of the town.

To celebrate the 15th anniversary of CHT accord, Khagrachhari Hill District Council and Khagrachhari Army Zone organised colourful procession in Khagrachhari town yesterday morning.



An expert examines a newly installed instrument at Kala-azar research centre at Surya Kanta Hospital in Mymensingh town yesterday.

## Kala-azar research centre opens in Mymensingh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Mymensingh

Kala-azar research centre was inaugurated at Surya Kanta Hospital in Mymensingh town yesterday.

Funded by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and Drugs for Neglected Diseases Initiative (DNDI), the centre will provide free treatment for Kala-azar patients for the next five years.

State Minister for Health and Family Planning Dr Captain (ret) Mujibur Rahman Fakir opened the 25-bed Kala-azar research centre as chief guest.

Later, a discussion meeting was held at Mymensingh Medical College and Hospital (MMCH) auditorium. Tarun Vij, country director, PATH, India; Sally Ellias, manager, Clinical Trials, DBDI; Dr Abbas Bhuiya, executive director, ICDDR,B; Hiteki Mizuma, director, JST HQ; Dr Thushara Eraj Indranath Fernando, WHO representative in Bangladesh; Vice-Chancellor of Bangladesh Agricultural University Prof Md. Rafiqul

Hoque and Mymensingh Zila Parishad Administrator advocate Johirul Haque Khoka took part in the discussion as special guests.

Prof Be-Nazir Ahmed, Director, DC and LD, CDC, DGHS presented a keynote paper on "Kala-azar Elimination in Bangladesh by 2015: A Review" at the meeting.

The minister in his speech said the government is working to eradicate Kala-Azar from the country by 2015 and the centre will help a lot in this regard.

People of Mymensingh district are more vulnerable to Kala-azar disease. As many as 8,800 cases were detected in Phulbaria, Trishal, Gafargaon, Muktagachha and Bhaluka upazilas in the last two years. The situation in Phulbaria is worse as 4403 Kala-azar patients have been found in the upazila.

Salma Akhtar, senior programmer of JICA, said Kala-azar case will be detected at the research centre by examining patient's urine instead of blood.

The patients will get modern treatment facilities at the center, the official added.



PHOTO: STAR

A big procession, marking the 15th anniversary of CHT peace treaty, was brought out by Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samity in Rangamati district town yesterday.

COASTAL ISLANDS OF PATUAKHALI

## Sudden pest attack frustrates farmers

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Patuakhali

Pest attack on aman plants, around a month before ripening of the main food crop of the coastal region, has appeared as a menace to the farmers of coastal islands in Patuakhali district.

During the last one week, a kind of pest locally named *shis kata leda poka* attacked several thousand acres of aman fields, and it has led to drying of around one-third of the plants in Rangabali, Barabaisdia and Chotobaishdia unions under newly formed Rangabali upazila, said locals.

Earlier this season, growing aman plants in the area showed all signs of good

yield but the sudden pest attack upsets the farmers' calculations.

"The pest makes holes just under the ears of paddy and the corn gets dried after two or three days. We had expected good yield of paddy but now we are frustrated due to the pest attack," said Rafiqul Islam, a farmer of Barabaisdia village under the upazila.

Alam Dafader, another farmer of the same village, who cultivated paddy on 20 acres of land, said, "The paddy will ripen only after one month but the pest appeared suddenly. Using insecticides in the field does not give that much result to save the corn."

Farmers store aman, the main paddy in the area, for

using throughout the year, and so, failure to protect the food crop from the pest will bring untold sufferings, said Abdul Jabbar and Sonu Mia of Char Ganga.

Most farmers cannot spray insecticides in their affected fields due to its high price, said Abdur Rob, a farmer of Koralia village in Chotobaishdia union.

When contacted, Md Rakib Hasan, upazila agriculture officer, said, "The pest locally known as *shis kata leda poka* widely attacked aman plants, especially the varieties cultivated on marshy and soft lands. We have suggested the farmers to use insecticides as soon as possible on all the paddy fields, whether or not it is attacked by the pest."

Farmers store aman, the main paddy in the area, for

## BDR, BSF meet on disputed land in Panchagarh

OUR CORRESPONDENT, Thakurgaon

A flag meeting between Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) and Indian Border Security Force (BSF) was held on Harihbasha border under Sadar upazila in Panchagarh yesterday over the ownership of a disputed land in Khudipara village.

In the last few months, a tense situation had been prevailing over the ownership of 34.6 acres of land adjacent to Harihbasha border.

At the sector commander-level meeting, the BGB officials strongly placed their claim saying that 34.6 acres of the village were within Bangladesh territory for decades while the BSF officials termed it an adversely possessed land.

After discussion, the both sides agreed to keep the land in its previous state until a joint land survey was held and a solution to the issue was found by the high-ups of BGB and BSF.

The BGB, BSF also decided to hold joint patrol on the disputed area.

Rangpur Sector Commander Col Kader Neyamul Fatemi led the seven-member BGB delegation while an eight member BSF team was headed by Shiliguri Sector DIG Reaz Ahmed Khan at the meeting held in Bangladeshi territory.

During the five and half hour long flag meeting that started at 11:30am, BGB also raised various border issues including smuggling of drugs and similar substances including phensidyl from India. On the other hand, BSF objected to alleged trespass by

Bangladeshi citizens and cattle smuggling by cutting barbed fences.

Among others, Commanding Officer of 18, BGB Battalion Lt. Colonel Md. Zakir Hossain, Deputy Commanding Officer Maj SM Shamim Reza, Commandant of 48, BSF Battalion Bijoy Sinha, Commandant of 93, BSF Battalion JS Neogi and Commandant of 58, BSF Battalion Man Shing, were present at the meeting.

During the meeting, the two sides also agreed to maintain peace on the border, show highest restraint in special circumstances and resolve border related problems through discussion.

They also agreed to take up programmes to develop awareness among the bordering people so that they obey border rules.



PHOTO: STAR

As there is no open yard or terminal for trucks at Benapole land port, goods-laden trucks often get stuck near the check post, creating a huge tailback that hampers smooth export-import activities between Bangladesh and India. This photo was taken yesterday.

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PHOTO: STAR

In the last one week, pest attack damaged thousands of acres of aman fields in the coastal islands of Patuakhali district. The photo was taken from Barabaisdia village in Rangabali upazila on Thursday.

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