

## Core aspects

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been implemented," Larma, president of Parbatai Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samiti (PCJSS), told a press conference at a hotel in the capital.

The PCJSS organised the briefing marking the 20th anniversary of the accord signing on December 2, 1997.

Expressing concerns regarding the full execution of the pact, Larma also alleged that many activities of the government rather go against the interests of the Jumma (indigenous) people.

Reading out a written statement, he said the government did not keep its promise of implementing the accord fully.

"As a result of this, the problem centring the CHT has not been resolved... the CHT Regional Council Act has also not been implemented yet and the council is kept non-effective."

Larma further alleged that the Jumma people were not getting jobs on a priority basis in the CHT area.

He said the CHT Regional Council and three CHT district councils were established to introduce a special ruling system in the hilly districts but those rather became "branches of the ruling political party and corruption".

The establishment of the CHT Regional Council's head office is still pending, he said, adding that it proved the reluctance of the government to implement the accord.

He also alleged that instead of implementing the CHT peace accord, the government "seemed to be against the agreement" and that was leading to "complications" in the CHT.

"At least 20 communal attacks have taken place since the signing of the accord and 11 of them were carried out during the regime of the present government. The main purpose of all those attacks was to drive away Jumma people from their own land."

The PCJSS chief also said the land dispute resolution commission was yet to start its functions although the "controversial" provisions of the CHT Land Dispute Resolution Commission Act 2001 were amended over a year ago.

"Although there is a CHT Land Commission, it does not have sufficient manpower and funding."

According to the first clause of the peace accord, Larma said, the government recognises the CHT as a tribal-populated region and also recognises the necessity of its protection.

He then accused the government of breaching the accord by including outsiders in the voter list as permanent residents of the CHT areas.

The Adivasi leader called upon the democratic, non-communal and liberal political parties as well as the people of the country to play effective roles in executing the accord for the greater interest of the country.

Dhaka University's Prof Mesbah Kamal, noted columnist Syed Abul Maksud and Oikya Nap President Pankaj Bhattacharya were also present during the press conference yesterday.

## 4 journalists

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Protesting the attack, journalists brought out a procession in Pabna town.

They then held a rally at Traffic Intersection and gave the local administration a 24-hour ultimatum for arresting the attackers, including land minister's son Shirhan Sherif Tomal, who is also the president of Ishwardi upazila unit of Jubo League.

Demanding resignation of the land minister, the journalists said they would not cover any news of the minister if his son was not punished.

"We went to Ishwardi for covering the story about the preparation on the occasion of prime minister's visit for inaugurating construction of Rooppur Nuclear Power Plant," said injured Partho.

During the time, they were informed that the followers of Tomal were damaging banners and posters welcoming the PM hung by their rival groups at Natunhat intersection. They rushed to the spot and started recording footage of the incident, he added.

Seeing this, Tomal's supporters, in his presence, started beating them up with sticks and iron rods around 3:30pm, Partha alleged.

They also damaged two laptops, three mobile sets and two motorbikes, he added.

This correspondent could not reach Tomal for his comments after repeated attempts.

Land Minister Shamsur Rahman, also the lawmaker of Pabna-4 (Ishwardi-Atghoria), told journalists that if his son was found involved in the attack, he should be punished.

Talking to The Daily Star, former lawmaker of the constituency Panjap Ali Biswas alleged that supporters of the land minister and his son damaged his banners and posters. They also beat up his men, he said.

The attackers also assaulted men of another AL leader, Robiul Alam Budu, as they protested the incident.

Earlier, Tomal and 10 other AL men were arrested over attacking and vandalising the house of a Chhatra League leader in Ishwardi on May 19 this year.

Later, they were released on bail.

Talking to this correspondent, Jihadul Kabir, superintendent of Pabna police, said they would take action against the attackers.

## Scourge of violence

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sites in 18 districts were surveyed for the study. The households were from 16 marginalised communities -- Chakma, Khymang, Khumi, BAWM, Marma, Tripura, Garo, Santal, Oran, Harijan, Rishi, Kiputra, traditional fisher folk, Hindu & Christian, brothel-based sex workers and people with disabilities.

The survey pointed out that indigenous people in the plains are more vulnerable to eviction from their homesteads for two reasons -- they are poor and they are religious minorities.

Shaheen Anam, executive director of Manusher Jonno Foundation, said people from influential quarters want to keep the marginalised people "powerless".

She said people should change their mentality to overcome the worsening situation of the marginalised people. "We are all trying to ensure the basic needs of the marginalised communities. The other important point is dignity. We have to ensure that too as it is also their fundamental right. But unfortunately fundamental rights are being violated in the country time and again."

"We have a responsibility towards the minority people. We should not depend only on the state. We have to bring changes to our personal life as well. We have to increase our capacity to accept the differences -- it could be differences of opinions and religions. We have to keep in mind that we are citizens of Bangladesh," she added.

Addressing the discussion, eminent rights activist Sultana Kamal praised the report as a comprehensive study and a step forward to achieve an equitable society.

She said the state is not solely responsible for ensuring equality, but its citizens are also responsible. "It's a national problem. So we have to be united to address the problem. We have to identify whether the marginalised groups are lagging behind or made to lag behind. Otherwise, we will be betraying the spirit of the Liberation War which inspired us to ensure an equitable society for all."

Former chairman of National Human Rights Commission Mizanur Rahman said the disparity between the people from mainstream society and marginalised people was still prevailing in the society, although the country achieved independence 45 years ago.

Marginalised people are subjected to violence and torture not only by the people from the mainstream society, but also by law enforcement agencies, reads the report.

## Overcome prejudice

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### LATIN SONGS BY NUNS

Earlier yesterday, the pope delivered a message of forgiveness in an open-air mass before a sea of Catholics in Yangon, many wearing colourful costumes from the country's myriad ethnic groups.

"I never dreamed I would see him in my lifetime," said Meo, an 81-year-old from the Akha minority in Shan state.

A choir of Myanmar nuns sang in Latin, accompanied by organ music, as Francis delivered a homily urging compassion -- opening his speech with "minglabar", Burmese for "hello".

"I can see that the Church here is alive," he said of a Catholic community numbering around 700,000 -- a tiny fraction of the country's 51 million people.

The pontiff noted that many Myanmar people "bear the wounds of violence, wounds both visible and invisible".

But he urged his audience to forgive anger and respond with "forgiveness and compassion".

His visit has been as much political as religious in a country on the defensive after the global outrage over the plight of the Rohingya.

He held private talks with both civilian leader Aung San Suu Kyi and the powerful army chief Min Aung Hlaing, who are part of a delicate power-sharing arrangement as the country emerges from decades of junta rule.

His caution so far will bring relief to Myanmar's Catholic leaders, who had sought the pontiff not to wade into the treacherous issue for fear of sparking a backlash from Buddhist hardliners.

Even the mention of the name Rohingya is incendiary to many among the majority-Buddhist population, who deny the group are a distinct minority and insist on calling them "Bengalis".

### DIPLOMATIC DANCE

Reactions to the pope's handling of the issue have been mixed, with some Rohingya expressing disappointment that he did not directly confront his hosts in public on their suffering or even mention their name.

But Kyaw Min, a former MP and prominent Rohingya activist, said he understood the pressures the pope was under and applauded his nuanced approach.

"He said there were some people who have been bullied and need to get their rights... this was about the Rohingya," Kyaw Min told AFP.

But hardline nationalist Buddhists

## 5 face trial

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clothes of Rupa were mentioned as evidence.

Expressing satisfaction with the charge framing, Rupa's family demanded justice for Rupa.

The accused -- bus helpers Shamim, 26, Akram, 35, and Jahangir, 20, driver Habibur, 45, and bus supervisor Safar Ali, 55 -- were brought to the court from Tangail District Jail yesterday.

"Lawyers of the accused filed three petitions with the court, seeking bail of their clients, discharging them from the case and reinvestigation into the case," said advocate Ataur Rahman Azad, general secretary of Tangail district unit of Bangladesh Manobadhisikar Bastobayan Sangstha, which assists the state side in the case.

After hearing from both the sides, the judge rejected all the petitions and framed charges against the accused, he added.

On August 25, police recovered an unidentified body of a woman near Tangail-Mymensingh road in Tangail's Madhupur upazila.

Following an autopsy, the body was buried at the Tangail central graveyard the next day. A murder case was filed with Madhupur Police Station the same day.

Seeing the news in the media, Rupa's family members went to Madhupur Police Station on August 28 and identified her from photographs.

The next day, law enforcers picked up five employees of the bus at Madhupur. The arrestees during interrogation admitted their involvement in the crime, police sources said.

The Senior Judicial Magistrate's Court in Tangail on August 29 and 30 recorded their confessional statements and sent them to jail.

Following a court order, police on August 31 exhumed Rupa's body and handed it over to her family. The victim was later buried at her village in Sirajganj's Tarash upazila.

Saiful Islam Khan, resident medical officer at Tangail General Hospital, submitted the autopsy report to the Tangail civil surgeon on September 12, mentioning that Rupa was raped before being murdered.

## Identity

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Owner of the house, his wife and mother-in-law are still being detained by Rab. Officers said they would decide whether to arrest them in a case filed over the incident after further interrogation.

Saber Reza Ahmed, officer-in-charge of Chapainawabganj Sadar Police Station, said no case was filed in connection with the incident.

## In pursuit

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Unable to achieve solvency she didn't give up. Lovely tried dairy and fish farming, and growing organic vegetables. These activities ran for five years, and in 2012 Lovely availed the opportunity to travel to Malaysia for training in oil seed production. But at home it was the fish farming that seemed most viable. She decided to concentrate on that.

"In August 2012, I leased four ponds for Tk 1 lakh and released fry. The business began in earnest from then," Lovely says. Since then, her business has grown. In the upcoming harvest season next April, Lovely estimates she will sell Tk 15 lakhs worth of fish.

Her reputation as a fish farmer means many people ask her for advice. "With the assistance of the fisheries office I have trained around 120 people in fish farming," she says, "including housewives, students and other farmers."

"After training with Lovely Yasmine, I have taken a lease on a pond to farm fish for myself," says one neighbour, Shilpi Begum.

Lovely currently employs twenty labourers on her farm, which now stretches across seven ponds. In her spare time, she is the general secretary of a human rights group which works against child marriage, dowries and domestic violence.

Needless to say, Lovely is more than a little pleased with her new life. Her eldest son works as a textile engineer in Tangail, the middle son is studying computer engineering at a private university in Dhaka while the youngest current boards at a residential school and college, also in the capital.

"Undoubtedly fish farming is very profitable," she remarks. "From my farm profits I have bought five decimals of land in Magura and almost thirty in Jhenidah."

She currently has a Tk 2 lakh bank loan for her business, and regrets that interest rates weren't more reasonable, since if they were she would be able to employ more labourers.

"Lovely is a successful entrepreneur," says Jhenidah senior upazila fishery officer Timir Baran Mondol. "She is energetic and skilled at fish farming. Through hard work she has achieved much, creating for herself and her family a prosperous future. Others would do well to follow her example."

But hardline nationalist Buddhists

## Govt finalises

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to the president today through the prime minister for approval, a law ministry high official requesting anonymity told The Daily Star yesterday.

If President Abdul Hamid approves the rules, the law ministry would issue a gazette notification to this effect, he said, adding that the disciplinary rules were prepared with SC and the government's consensus.

The Supreme Court recently went through the draft and sent it back to the ministry with its opinions.

The official refused to disclose further details on the rules.

On November 16, Law Minister Anisul Huq met five judges of the Appellate Division of the SC and discussed the rules and then told The Daily Star that the problem regarding issuance of a gazette notification determining the discipline of lower court judges had been solved.

The gazette notification might be issued by December 3, the date scheduled for the next hearing of the Masdar Hossain case, known as the judiciary separation case, at the Supreme Court, he said.

On November 5, Attorney General Mahbubey Alam told reporters that [the then] chief Justice Surendra Kumar Sinha wanted to see that the rules curb the power of the president. The government, therefore, was trying to resolve the issue through discussions with the SC and the law ministry, he added.

While presiding over the Appellate Division bench, Justice Sinha had expressed annoyance and dissatisfaction several times at the

government's failure to issue a gazette notification on the rules.

Article 116 of the original charter of 1972 had empowered the SC to decide on the posting, promotion and leave of lower court judges. The top court had also control over the magistrates' exercise of judicial powers and could discipline the judicial service staffers when necessary.

Over the years, this article has been amended several times, curtailing the apex court's powers.

Currently, the powers to control and discipline subordinate courts are vested in the president, who exercises these powers in consultation with the SC.

However, according to article 48 (3) of the constitution, the president acts on the advice of the prime minister. This gives the government ample scope to exercise power over the judiciary.

In a message on October 31 last year, Justice Sinha had said such a "dual rule" was hampering the judicial work and was also increasing justice-seekers' sufferings.

"The Supreme Court alone cannot take steps regarding lower court judges' promotion and transfer or any disciplinary actions against them due to the [present] article 116.

Judges cannot be appointed to fill many vacant posts at district courts on time due to the dual rule," he said in the message issued on the occasion of the ninth anniversary of the separation of the judiciary from the executive.

The lower judiciary was separated from the executive branch on November 1, 2007, following the Supreme Court directives in the Masdar Hossain case.

## One convict hanged

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reporters at the jail gate.

Around 8:45pm, Additional District Magistrate Rahenul Islam, Additional Deputy Commissioner (revenue) Mahmud Hasan and Civil Surgeon Monzurul Haque led by Additional Deputy Commissioner Farzana Mannan entered the jail and left after the execution.

Shahidul had been in Dhaka Central Jail since he was arrested. He was taken to Kashimpur in 2012.

Shazneen Tasnim Rahman, a class-IX student of Scholastica school, was killed at her Gulshan home on April 23, 1998. Her father Latifur Rahman is the chairman of Transcom Group.

The trial took place in Dhaka's 2nd Special