Dhaka University Centennial Illuminations

প্রধান অতিথি: জনাব মোঃ আবদুল হামিদ্

CHT Accord Anniversary

24 years on, legal tangles still remain

With the historic Chittagong Hill Tracts Peace Accord stepping into its 24th year today, some legal complexities involving the issues of CHT Regional Council are still now awaiting the final settlements.

Since its formation in 1999, two years after the accord was signed on December 2, 1997, the CHT Regional Council has been functioning under the leadership of Jyotirindra Bodhipriya Larma, popularly known as Santu

appeals were filed with Two the Supreme Court 10 years back challenging a High Court verdict that declared the CHT Regional Council illegal and unconstitutional.

But the SC's Appellate Division could not settle the issues because the parties concerned of the case have not apparently taken any extensive move for hearing the appeals for their disposal.

The apex court is scheduled today to hear the review petitions filed challenging its judgment. The court on November 22, 2016, declared the CHT Regulation-1,900 constitutionally valid and effective.

The CHT Regulation-1,900 had been issued by the then British colonisers in order to protect the diverse culture and its indigenous inhabitants from foreign immigrants. This regulation came into force on May 1, 1900, giving special status to the CHT area.

Following two writ petitions filed by two private companies -- Rangamati Food Products Ltd and Wagachara Estate Ltd -- the HC had several years back declared the CHT Regulation-1,900 as a

Following an appeal filed by the state challenging the HC verdicts, the Appellate Division on November 22, 2016, declared the CHT Regulationconstitutionally valid and effective.

Barrister Imran A Siddik, a lawyer for Rangamati Food Products Ltd and Wagachara Estate Ltd, said the contents of the review petitions and the appeals

chief guest from the Bangabhaban,

need to consider world standards in

He said parents and guardians send

Besides, the country and the people

determining curriculum and teaching.

their children to a university with high

invest in educating them. The students

have to acquire the ability to fulfill the

Hamid said the expansion of

hopes and aspirations of the family, the

students, departments and institutes

contributes to the development of a

university but the quality of education

including universities, have to come

forward to enhance the quality of

education and the capacity of students,

taking into account the needs and

qualifications of the national and

university, which began its journey on

The protesting students yesterday

vowed to continue their movement for

In the capital, hundreds of students

in Rampura, Shantinagar, and Johnson

Road in Old Dhaka demonstrated

They said even though the

government enacted the Road Transport

Act-2018 following the previous road

safety movement, the law was yet to be

vehicles and checking the licences and

registrations at Rampura intersection,

it became apparent how many vehicles

At least six police vehicles had no

Traffic sergeants were reluctant to

slap fines on them yesterday. Students

had to protest for an hour to compel

the cops to fine a policeman driving

The students in Dhaka will not block

roads today as Higher Secondary

However, students will form hour-long

human chains at noon and observe

two minutes' silence to press home

their 11-point demand tomorrow,

said Khilgaon Model College student

Shohagi Samia on behalf of the

demand during the demonstration

Notre Dame College student Nayeem

Hasan and Ekramunnesa High School

student Mainuddin Islam must be

brought to justice and their families

must be compensated fairly, they

yesterday in Rampura Bridge area.

The students raised their 11-point

People involved in the deaths of

examination

without licence and number plate.

DEMONSTRATIONS,

11-POINT DEMAND

did not have fitness certificates.

students started stopping

throughout yesterday.

implemented.

valid papers.

Certificate

students.

demanded.

He hoped that the DU will play a

"Higher education institutions,

and research is the key indicator.

international labour market.

leading role in this journey.

The country's oldest

hopes and aspirations.

country and the people."

frastructure faculty

the university authorities also

Degrees not enough

members.

public

Cops sue 800 for vandalism

filed in connection with CHT issues are

City

The CHT Regulation-1,900 substantial law regulating the administration of the tribal area which is running under the CHT Regional Council formed under the CHT

Regional Council Act-1998, he added.

declared the CHT Regional Council Act-1998 illegal and unconstitutional.

In the verdict, the HC said the unitary character of the state, which is the basic feature of the constitution, has been hampered due to its formation. The council can now run since the HC verdict has been halted following a stay

In 2011, the state and the CHT Regional Council filed two separate appeals with the SC challenging the HC judgment, saying that the CHT Regional Council is a statutory authority to facilitate the functions of three hill district councils and was formed in line

The provisions of the CHT Regional Council Act-1998, which have been declared unconstitutional by the HC, are actually protected by the constitution, as it provides for affirmative action in favour of a disadvantaged section of the

On March 3, 2011, the Appellate Division upheld its chamber judge's stay order and allowed the government and Santu Larma to move separate

appeals before it against the HC verdict. The appeals are still now pending with the apex court for their hearing.

Attorney General AM Amin Uddin earlier told this newspaper that his office would place arguments before the Appellate Division in support of the appeals when these would come up before the apex court serially.

July 01, 1921, is celebrating its 100th

founding anniversary. The celebration

has been delayed by five months due to

Sharmin Chaudhury joined the

programme as a guest of honour,

with DU Vice-Chancellor Dr Md

covers of special books, photography

albums and websites on the centenary

The president also unveiled the

A documentary and a theme song on

opening day of the celebrations, while a

greeting message from Bhutanese Prime

Minister Lotay Tshering was also played

Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen,

Chairman Prof Kazi Shahidullah and

Dhaka University Alumni Association

President AK Azad spoke on the

The 16-day festivities will end on

Their other demands include 24/7

half fare for students guaranteed by an

official notification and applicable in all

the number of BRTC buses.

owners based on their share.

5:00am, they said.

"VESTED QUARTER

DESTABLISING COUNTRY"

public transport nationwide, increasing

They said bus owners should be held

accountable for fitness and registrations

The protesters also said to prevent

reckless competition among buses, one

bus company should be assigned on a

single route and daily earnings should

be distributed among all transport

They demanded streamlining the

entire transport system, making sure

that all buses have ticket counters, and

labour rights for drivers, including

maximum six hours a day driving time.

heavy vehicles should only be permitted

to operate between midnight and

Information Minister Hasan Mahmud

yesterday said some people were trying

"Those who aren't students carried

to destabilise the country using the

out arson attacks on buses after the

death of a student in the city's Rampura

area. Is it an accident or a preplanned

incident? Everything will be clear after

investigation and legal steps will be

taken against those involved in the

incident," he said while talking to

in Rampura unfortunate, the minister

said, "The incident occurred around

10:45pm and it was found live on many

Facebook pages, including Nirapad

Sarak and Basher Kella. How did they

stream live reaching the spot within 11-

12 minutes? Were they present on the

spot before the incident occurred?"

Terming the death of Mainuddin

reporters at the secretariat.

Trucks, garbage trucks, and other

of vehicles, and unlicensed drivers.

Victory Day, with a concert and laser

show on the central playground of the

Grants

Education Minister Dipu Moni.

Commission

Sangsad Speaker Shirin

the Covid-19 pandemic.

Akhtaruzzaman in the chair.

Iativa

of the university.

University

occasion.

during the programme.

related to each other.

The lawyer said they would seek adjournment from the apex court today on hearing of the review petitions as they are not prepared for placing

arguments on the issue at this moment. Following two other writ petitions filed by Bangalee settler M Badiuzzaman and SC's pro-Jamaat-e-Islami lawyer Tajul Islam on April 13, 2010, the HC

order from the Appellate Division.

with the constitution.

population, they said in the appeals.

A privilege now gets in the way

seen on stage.

of the migrant workers. They argue that human trafficking is a criminal offence and it cannot be handled through negotiation and arbitration.

They fear that the government decision will further shield the perpetrators, who are "already very much protected by the system itself".

The decision was taken following a meeting held in October at the home ministry. Along with Imran, Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan and Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen were present in the meeting, also attended by heads of all stakeholders involved in sending workers abroad. THE MEETING

Daily Star obtained audio recordings captured during the meeting from two sources. It later verified the authenticity of the clips with some stakeholders present in the meeting.
In one of the clips, Shahidul Alam,

director-general of BMET, is heard saying, "The police don't need to be so proactive in attempting to catch agents. Why would they catch those who have valid licences and drag them to court?"

"The trafficking law prosecutes a party when a victim is forced or deceived into going [abroad]. But these people [migrant workers] pay money to go, they make passports to go... so they are not forced. They are going by themselves. This is why we think there are other steps, other than police action, that can be taken. This can include suspension of licences [of agents].

"If we find repeat offenders, we ourselves will ask law enforcers to take action against them. Make the victims understand that when they face any problem, they should come to us instead of going to the police."

Contacted over phone, Shahidul reiterated the statement.

Meeting sources said Monirul Islam, head of Special Branch (SB) of police, said in the meeting that he endorsed the Bangladesh Association of International Recruiting Agencies (BAIRA) to deal with problems related to the issue.

He told the meeting that whatever directives are given will be conveyed to investigation agencies.

Law enforcers assured that they would not take any immediate action, the sources present in the meeting,

WHY THIS IS A PROBLEM

The decision comes at a time when the rate of disposal of human trafficking cases is only 2.6 percent, according to data from law enforcers.

Experts fear this development would give a further shield of immunity in a

system that already protects perpetrators. 69 lakh was spent last year in rescuing tortured women migrant workers from offence and a criminal offence cannot be dealt by negotiation and arbitration," said Shariful Hasan, head of Brac's

Migration Programme.

Dhaka University Pro-Vice Chancellor (academic) Prof ASM Maksud Kamal receives a memento, on behalf

of President Abdul Hamid, from Vice Chancellor Prof Md Akhtaruzzaman at the inaugural ceremony of the

Shirin Sharmin Chaudhury, Education Minister Dipu Moni and Foreign Minister AK Abdul Momen are also

university's centenary celebrations at the Osmani Memorial Auditorium yesterday. Jatiya Sangsad Speaker

He said the decision could only be an option for cases involving workers not being paid in time. Some of the most horrifying

instances of human trafficking in the last few years have been cases of labour exploitation and trafficking, where the victims were sent legally as migrant workers with BMET clearances and legitimate visas.

Fourteen-year-old Umme Kulsum and 13-year-old Nodi Akhter were tortured to death in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) last year. Both were sent legally with BMET cards.

Kulsum was sent by MH Trade International, which helped her make her passport and put her on the books as a 25-year-old woman. Twenty-five is the minimum age for a female to work According to the rules, female

migrant workers are supposed to physically show up at the BMET for training, and for visual verification for their BMET cards Both the children had told their

recruiting agent that they were being tortured, but to no avail. The proprietor of MH Trade

International was arrested in a wellpublicised raid in September last year when other migrant workers, who became victims of sexual abuse in Saudi Arabia, provided testimonials.

However, BMET does not think that the recruiting agents are to blame, even when they aresending children claiming they are 25-year-olds.

BMET DG Shahidul told this correspondent last week that it was the job of the passport authorities, not theirs, to check documents related to

According to him, in a country with such high rates of stunting, "All women between 13 and 30 look the same". **CONVICTION OF**

TRAFFICKERS RARE

A total of 538 cases were filed under the anti-trafficking law last year. Of them, only 14 were disposed of, but here's the scary part -- only one of those 14 cases resulted in a conviction.

In all 13 of the other cases, the accused were acquitted. A total of 24,549 people are currently accused in trafficking cases, according to data from the law enforcers.

The annual report of the Wage Earners' Welfare Board shows that Tk

previous five years; of whom 51 had committed suicide. Time and again recruiters have been caught circumventing the legal system to traffic workers. But BAIRA denies this. According to the home ministry meeting's audio

various countries. As per figures from

2020, a total of 473 women returned

home dead from the Middle East in the

PHOTO: RASHED SHUMON

recording, Abul Bashar, BAIRA's former chairman, dismissed the cases of the female migrant workers coming back tortured by saying, "The women because of whom we are being prosecuted are essentially being wanted back home by their husbands. The employers take the women to their respective countries after paying a certain amount of money. The women cannot come back just like

According to the Kafalah system, if a female worker comes back without completing her contract, the agency has to provide a substitute worker, or pay \$2,000 to the employer. "Because no action is being taken

against the employers, the culprits cannot be identified. The recruiters can then recruit another female migrant worker and then abuse her in the same way," Shariful Hasan told this newspaper.

The United States Department of State publishes its "Trafficking in Persons Report" each year. The 2021 report stated, "Official complicity in human trafficking, trafficking-related corruption, and impunity for traffickers remained serious concerns, continuing to inhibit law enforcement action during the year. The government was reluctant to acknowledge or investigate such claims."

"Observers alleged some officials district employment and manpower offices allegedly facilitated human trafficking, and some traffickers in rural areas had political connections that enabled them to operate with impunity," it added.

It further went on to say that government officials had conflicts of interest in approving "prosecution of abusive recruitment agencies".

At the home ministry meeting, the recruiting agencies further demanded that the employers abusing the workers be held responsible and blacklisted, instead of the traffickers.

There has been only one case where a Saudi woman was handed a death sentence for killing her Bangladeshi maid named Abiron Begum in March 2019. This conviction happened in February this year.

election ads ahead of 2022 Philippines vote

Google to halt

Google will stop carrying election ads in the Philippines ahead of the May 2022 presidential vote, the internet giant said yesterday, similar to action it has taken in the United States.

by governments and election watchdogs over the use of targeted political advertising, especially disinformation campaigns to sway voters. The updated policy goes into effect

Alarm has been raised in recent years

on February 8, covering ads on Google, YouTube and its other platforms including shopping. "Google is focusing its efforts and

resources on upcoming election-related initiatives which aim to help people access useful and accurate information via product features and media literacy programmes, encourage participation in the voting process, and help protect the integrity of the elections," it said in a statement.

The Philippines's Commission on Elections said in a statement that the Google announcement was in line with a law that prohibits political advertising ahead of the campaign period for the May 9 vote.

Campaigning starts on February 8 for presidential and senate polls and March 25 for all other posts.

Inequality

FROM PAGE 1

But the weak accountability in law enforcement demonstrate threats not just to our positive achievements, but challenge the very credibility of the state," Sobhan added.

While Bangladesh has made huge progress on social indicators, the benefits of health measures and education have not been equally distributed between the poor and the rich and between men and women, said Nurul Islam, a former deputy chairman of the planning commission.

"Poverty had reduced in Bangladesh and all the statistics have proved it. But, inequality has increased. And inequality is basically a political problem, in my view."

Policymaking based on data collection by independent non-government agencies is very important.

'If government agencies and politicians interfere in data analysis, they will never get the right answer and they will be blamed tomorrow for their failure today," Islam added.

Planning Minister MA Mannan, however, begs to differ.

"Freedom was fundamental for the BIDS, the General Economics Division and the other organisations to work. And Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina has given us a wide berth. We could do whatever we wanted to do, he said.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina sent in a written message to the organiser declaring the three-day event open.

Tensed night

FROM PAGE 1

The cockpit crew were informed of the matter and asked to make an emergency landing.

After getting the information, a eam concerned sat for an emergency meeting and took all precautions, he

"We later came to know that the information was not correct," added Touhid. "However, we took all measures as per the standard operating procedure, informed all security agencies, the Army and the Navy commandos, Armed Police Battalion, Rab members and fire fighters," he said.

At first, the aircraft was kept on a taxiway, then cordoned off and searched.

After completing the search -- carryons and other luggage -- the aircraft was declared safe by the commanding officer of Bangladesh Air Force.

"The passengers went through a body search and their luggage were thoroughly searched as well," an airport official said.

Witnesses said army bomb disposal units along with a huge number of military commandos and air force personnel were seen at the airport while five fire engines, ambulances and members of Rapid Action Battalion, armed police were there

Dewan Azad Hossain, duty officer, fire service control room, told The Daily Star that they received a phone from Air Traffic Control, HSIA around 9:00pm that an aircraft on the way to the Dhaka might have a bomb on board.

The ATC officials requested the control room to send fire engines to the airport, he said.

The aircraft was later taken to Bangabandhu Base of Bangladesh Air Force on the west side. After suspension of flight operation

for around three and a half hours, normal operations at HSIA resumed around 12:45am, sources at the airport, said.

equipment are needed for her treatment. Thus, bringing in doctors from abroad is not the solution.

He also said that Khaleda's treatment was not available at all medical centres in the USA, UK and Germany. Only a handful of centres could offer the facilities "A complete team is required to treat

her. Those who are saying that Khaleda can be treated here is only supporting the government's stance.' DAB Secretary General Abdus Salam said Khaleda was diagnosed

with liver cirrhosis and treatment of liver transplant or liver cirrhosis is not available in Bangladesh. "Till the date, there are reports of two liver transplants in Bangladesh.

condition of the other is not good. So, the claim of liver cirrhosis being available reatments Bangladesh is not true, he added.

Among them, one died and the physical

About Khaleda's latest condition, Harun said, "Her haemoglobin level dropped slightly. She did bleed on Monday night. We are yet to get other pathological reports.

Reading out a written statement, the DAB demanded Khaleda Zia's advanced treatment abroad and her permanent Meanwhile, BNP Secretary General

Mirza Fakhrul Islam Alamgir alleged that the Awami League government, not the law, is the barrier to sending Khaleda abroad for better treatment. "We all know that Khaleda Zia is the law but the government can send Khaleda abroad anytime if it wants," he said adding, "The barrier is not the law, but the current illegitimate government.' He came up with the remarks at

"silent procession" programme of Jatiyatabadi Mohila Dal organised in front of the party's Nayapaltan headquarters demanding the release of Khaleda and permission for sending her abroad for better treatment.

The law enforcers did not allow them to bring out any procession and later they staged a demonstration there.

The 76-year-old former premier was diagnosed with liver cirrhosis and to treat her she needs to be taken abroad immediately in an advanced centre for better treatment.

Khaleda has long been suffering from arthritis, diabetes, as well as dental and eye problems. She was admitted to the hospital on November 13 and moved to the CCU on the following day, nearly a week after she was discharged from the same healthcare facility.

Khaleda was sent to jail on February 8, 2018, in a corruption case. Due to the coronavirus pandemic, she was given a temporary release on certain conditions on March 25 last year. The term of her release has been extended four times so far.

EMINENT CITIZENS FOR KHALEDA'S RELEASE

Twenty-three eminent citizens of the country yesterday urged the government Naser Bakhtiar.

to send BNP Chairperson Khaleda Zia abroad immediately. "Khaleda Zia's family has requested the government to send her abroad

immediately for better treatment. We are urging the government to consider this request cordially and to allow Khaleda to get treatment abroad without any delay," read the statement. The statement also read, "We think that if the government shows such a humane

attitude, it will also play a positive role in creating a better political culture. Referring to media reports, the statement said former prime minister

Khaleda Zia's physical condition is in a critical state. She has been suffering from various

chronic diseases for a long time and after being infected with Covid-19 her physical condition has gradually deteriorated, it read. The 23 eminent citizens are

Chowdhury, Zafrullah Ahmed Kamal, Prof Swapan Adnan, Photographer Shahidul Alam, Prof Parveen Hasan, Prof Asif Nazrul, Prof Shahnaz Huda, right activists Shireen Huq, Noor Khan Liton, Rehnuma Ahmed, Hana Shams Ahmed, female leaders Farida Akhter and Naila Z Khan, Jahangirnagar University's Nasrin Khandakar, Mirza Taslima Sultana and Prof Sayeed Ferdous, Chattogram University's Maidul Islam, advocate Subrata Chowdhury, advocate Hasnat Kaium, researcher Rozina Begum, cultural activist Arup Rahee, journalist Dr Saydia Gulrukh and social worker

No Scope for delays seriously ill. She is now fighting for her life. The government talked about